Background for 6/4 – Jared X Lloyd Carter @ KFCF re: San Joaquin Valley water issues and activities

<u>San Joaquin water resources and its challenges</u>:

SJR is important source of irrigation water for the very productive CV ag industry. It also has supported several salmon/steelhead runs - one of which no longer exists; the others are struggling. [note: much of the municipal water supply in SJ valley is ground water – that's a whole other set of problems, i.e., arsenic; salinity…]

The San Joaquin is one of the most intensively used rivers in CA, and repeatedly has been on American Rivers' list of most endangered rivers in US. In short, it is over-allocated. Diversions above Fresno (@ Friant Dam, built in 1940s by CVP) have left much of the downstream riverbed dry for over 60 miles.

Ag is biggest water user and biggest source of pollution. Water quality is degraded as a result of discharges (pesticides & fertilizers; naturally-occurring selenium on the westside; and salinity from imported water running off farmland)

Poor water quality and low flows affect the Delta, as well. Avg 15% of Delta inflow from San Joaquin, and much of this is pumped back out.

<u>Major actions underway</u>:

Controlling Ag Discharges: The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is a leader within the State in developing "Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program". California is unique in regulated ag discharges – they are not regulated under the CWA. While they are working to put the long-term program in place, the State is requiring that irrigation districts monitor the downstream water bodies to determine where the problem spots are and how best to control them.

Clean Water Act activity: The SJR is listed as "impaired" for a number of pollutants – selenium, pesticides, salinity, boron – meaning we have data to show that levels are higher than our standards. We have approved TMDLs (i.e., plans to restore water quality) for all these pollutants. The Water Board is also working on another Valley-wide TMDL for additional pesticides. In addition, we are assisting the the State Water Resources Control Board as they upgrade their water quality standards for the lower San Joaquin, where it meets the Delta; these standards will effect flow.

Improved monitoring: EPA is leading an effort, with the Water Board and local stakeholders, to develop a better system for monitoring and assessment of water quality. Currently, much data is collected by different parties for different purposes. It is too often not widely shared or not interpreted. Our goal is a more effective and efficient approach that gives us and the public the

information we need to focus resources on the most important problems, and to make sure we are making progress in restoring water quality

Selenium: The US Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for dealing with the "drainage problem" (selenium leaching from irrigation run-off). [FYI – there are political discussions & negotiations underway to determine what feds will fund, what Irrigation districts will be required to do, including how much land retirement . EPA not privy to specifics.]

Flow and fish recovery: The US Bureau of Reclamation is leading the program to restore flow and salmon runs to the upper SJR. [This was the result of the historic 2007 settlement from an NRDC lawsuit filed in 1988.] Interim flows now being released have resulted in a continuous river.

Interim Federal Action Plan for the Bay-Delta of 12/09: EPA is a signatory with 5 other federal agencies, committing to working with the State on Delta water supply reliability and ecosystem recovery. We made several commitments, including to assess whether the collective regulatory work in place and under development was sufficient to address the water quality aspect of the Delta crisis. This assessment is underway and we plan to have findings and recommendations next year.

Subjects that could come up that we can cover tomorrow:

- proposed extension to schedule for use of San Luis Drain by Grasslands area drainers.

- economic impact of water shortages (fish vs farm debate)

- BDCP and the peripheral canal

- ag water contracts